

[Letter from John A. Lomax to Harold Spivacke (with original envelope)]

PORT ARANSAS FEB 8 P.M. 1939

Mr. Harold Spivacke

Chief Division of Music

Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

over

Consider Greene's letter as possible publicity for the Folk Song Archive—if you think best?

file Port Aransas, Texas 2/7/ 19 39

Dear Mr. Spivacke:

I am asking Mr. Greene to wire you for any concessions about the Negro folk song material. It is a matter of relief to me that the records are by now back in your hands. Hereafter, for any reason, you may feel sure that I shall not again make a similar request of you. Would you please send Mr. Greene's letter up for Mr. Putnam's reading? He heard from your predecessor in office so many over aspersions on my persistence in recording Negro music (as well as on any other possibly damaging angle) that I should like for Mr. Putnam to see what Mr. Greene has to say. I think, also, that this letter should remain in your files as an answer to critics who may be telling you of my manifest and confessed short-comings.

In this connection, may I say again that I expect you to object now to any phase of the collecting trip that I have outlined to you that does not meet with your approval? And,

Library of Congress

disregarding my suggestion, please feel free to make your own directions about what you think I should do. You must get into your head that at least one of my faults is not an overplus(?) of ego, that I know it all, that I do not confess to many gross blunders, due to ignorance, inexperience or sheer stupidity—all equally blamable. You can speak your mind to me. I'll welcome any suggestions.

Last week I made a 500 mile preliminary trip down to the Rio Grande on my own expense, locating sources and starting at least half a dozen people to lining up singers for me. At any other place I plan to stop on my way to Washington (as I wrote to you briefly from Houston) I know whom I should see and, in each case, some of the material I expect to find. Alan Lomax has written at length what his ideas are. Some of his directions I shall follow; some I shall not.

With kind regards, I am Always sincerely John A. Lomax